



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Townsend Building
401 Federal Street Suite 2
Dover, Delaware 19901-3639
<http://education.delaware.gov>

Mark A. Holodick, Ed.D.
Secretary of Education
(302) 735-4000
(302) 739-4654 - fax

February 7, 2023

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

In an effort to give all children in Delaware the greatest opportunity for success, Delaware legislators passed House Bill 202 into law, effective July 1, 2023, requiring all licensed child care programs to participate in the Delaware Department of Education's (DDOE) developmental and social emotional screening system.

The DDOE's Early Childhood Support Team, which includes the Office of Early Learning (OEL) and Office of Childcare Licensing (OCCL), has been meeting regularly with stakeholders to support full implementation and sustainability. Information regarding this law has been shared in various ways including OCCL email blasts, provider calls, and during Delaware Early Childhood Council (DECC) meetings. This letter is another communication to make you aware of this law and available resources.

Here is important information you need to know about developmental and social emotional screening:

What is the purpose? Providing developmental and social emotional screening for young children is an effective and efficient way to check a child's development, celebrate a child's milestones, and determine whether follow-up steps are needed to support their development. It is also an important first step toward identifying children with delays or disabilities in the critical early years. Research shows that children who qualify and receive intervention services are more likely to be successful readers, less likely to continue needing special education services later in life, more likely to have improved social skills, and are more likely to graduate from high school. This screening will help to identify children who may be in need of evaluation for early intervention or early childhood special education.

Who does this apply to? All licensed child care programs must ensure that each enrolled child between the age of birth and 5 years old, not yet in kindergarten, completes DDOE's approved developmental and social emotional screening. Children with IFSP's or IEP's do not require screening.

How does this work? The screening system approved by DDOE is the *Ages and Stages Questionnaires* (ASQ:3 & ASQ-SE:2) using the DDOE ASQ Online Enterprise account. All licensed child care programs will use this screening system statewide for consistency. It's free for your use.

Both questionnaires are intended to be done by the family of the enrolled child. The screening tools rely on family caregivers as experts. They are easy to use, family- friendly, and create the

snapshot needed to celebrate milestones and catch delays. Child care teachers should encourage the family to complete the screening and assist in completion if needed. If the family declines to complete the screening and then gives written permission, the child's teacher shall then complete the child's screening on behalf of the family. Once the screening is submitted, it will be reviewed and assigned to your program account(s) where you can view the results.

When does this go into effect? This law is effective July 1, 2023. Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, family, large family, and center child care programs will be monitored at their license renewal time on their status toward fulfilling the requirements of this bill. During this timeframe, child care programs will receive technical assistance to work through the new process and logistics of full compliance. We will not cite for non-compliance but expect to see progress being made towards full implementation.

Next Steps:

You, as a child care program, do not need to purchase anything at your own expense. DDOE is providing the online data system, training, and technical assistance.

Enclosed you will find the *ASQ Quick Start Guide*, which explains in detail how to get started. You will need to follow these steps to get registered onto the DDOE ASQ portal.

Our team has developed a variety of free resources and can provide free technical assistance to help you meet your responsibilities. All resources can be found on the DDOE website:

https://education.delaware.gov/families/birth-age-5/early_resources/developmental_screenings/

Thank you for your attention to this important time-sensitive information and your dedication in supporting Delaware's youngest learners on their path to be ready for success in college, career and life.

If you need assistance, please contact Jenny Grady at de.screens@doe.k12.de.us

Sincerely,



Caitlin Gleason, M.Ed.
Associate Secretary
Early Childhood Support Team